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ABSTRACT

Fall 1978 survey results for member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) in the states represented by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education are analyzed and contrasted to the overall results from a national survey sample. There were declines in total graduate enrollment and in the number of first-time graduate students for CGS-member institutions in the West. These institutions also received fewer applications than previously, possibly indicating a continuation of this trend. A larger proportion of graduate students at the CGS-sampled doctorate-granting institutions in the West attend on a full-time basis than do their counterparts nationally. (SW)

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Project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate & Professional Education

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WICHE

Improving Education In The West

WICHE

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education is a nonprofit agency created in the 1950s by the governors and legislatures of the 13 western states. Through interstate sharing and research, WICHE helps states provide high quality, cost-effective higher education to meet the human resource needs of the states and the education needs of the citizens. WICHE serves Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Project Intent

WICHE's project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate and Professional Education encourages resource sharing in graduate and professional education in the West by providing information about these programs throughout the region. The project is establishing an information system that will enable higher education decision makers to plan for the future of graduate and professional education from a regional perspective. The graduate education project is supported by a two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and by WICHE state dues through its Student Exchange Program.

The project seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of graduate education in the West so that both students and taxpayers are better served.

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REPORT ON FALL 1978 SURVEY OF GRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN THE WICHE STATES

March 1979

Report 79-1

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

P.O. Drawer P Boulder, Colorado 80302

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REPORT ON FALL 1978 SURVEY OF GRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN THE WICHE STATES*

The Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) conduct an annual survey of graduate enrollment at CGS-member institutions. This brief report contrasts fall 1978 survey results for CGS-member institutions in the WICHE states who responded to the survey and the overall results from the national survey sample.

CGS institutions nationally award 99 percent of the earned doctorates and 85 percent of master's degrees conferred. The response rate to the national survey was 83 percent. The number of institutions in the WICHE states responding to the survey varied from 43 to 50, depending on the question. This response rate approximates that for the nation as a whole. Because of the smaller sample size in the West, however, the data for the WICHE states should be interpreted with extra caution. This is especially true for the master's level institutions, since the sample of Ph.D.-granting institutions represents a greater proportion of institutions in that category. Despite these limitations the data are useful indicators of both national and regional trends. The data are presented in four tables, each accompanied by a brief description.

Total Enrollment

The survey data reveal that total fall 1978 graduate enrollment in the WICHE states declined approximately 2 percent from the previous fall. The overall decline was accounted for by a decline in enrollment at institutions awarding

*WICHE gratefully thanks Bernard V. Khoury, Program Director, Graduate Record Examinations Board for the data presented in this report. Any interpretations presented remain the responsibility of WICHE.

only the master's degree. Because of gains at public universities, graduate enrollment at doctorate-granting institutions increased slightly. These trends are consistent with those nationwide. Nationally, enrollment at doctorate-granting institutions also increased because of gains at public universities, while enrollment at institutions in other categories decreased. See Table 1.

First-Time Enrol ment

Part of the decline in graduate enrollment, in both the WICHE states and nationally, is accounted for by a drop in the numbers of first-time students. The exception to this pattern in the West is first-time enrollments at private doctorate degree-granting institutions, which were up 6 percent in fall 1978. The overall decline in first-time graduate student enrollments in the West (as reported by the CGS sample of 45 institutions) was 4.3 percent. Nationwide, the decline was 2.4 percent. See Table 2.

Applications for Graduate Study

Applications for graduate study at 44 CGS-member institutions in the West were down 2.1 percent in 1978. Nationwide, 262 CGS survey respondents received 1.6 percent fewer applications in 1978 than in 1977. Doctorate degree-granting institutions, both in the West and nationwide, experienced the smallest overall decrease in applications. Private institutions at both levels in the West recorded an overall increase in the number of graduate school applicants. However, the number of institutions included in this group, especially at the master's highest level, may not accurately reflect trends within the total population of private graduate-level institutions in the West. Applications for graduate study at 34 public institutions in the West were down 3 percent compared to a decrease of less than 1 percent nationally. Insofar as the

number of applications received by graduate schools is related to subsequent first-time enrollment, the short-run outlook is probably one of a continued decline in enrollment in the West and nationally. See Table 3.

Full-Time and Part-Time Enrollment

Table 4 combines data from public and independent institutions and depicts the percentage breakdown of enrollments into full-time and part-time categories. Several differences in enrollment patterns are apparent in the data presented. A larger proportion of graduate students at the CGS-sampled doctorate-granting institutions in the West attend on a full-time basis than do their counterparts nationally. In 1978, 60 percent of graduate students at doctorate-granting institutions in the West attended full-time compared to 47 percent nationally. Both figures are higher than the respective percentages of full-time students in 1977 (55 percent--WICHE; 45 percent--U.S.). These differences are probably attributable to the geographic locations of many doctorate degree-granting institutions in the West, which are situated away from major urban centers where students are more likely to attend part-time. In contrast, about 80 percent of the graduate students enrolled at the master's level, both in the West and nationally, attend part-time. These figures point to the fact that a majority of graduate students, 55 percent in the West and 59 percent nationwide, attend part-time--a fact which is often overlooked in policy considerations.

Summary

Declines in total graduate enrollment and in the number of first-time graduate students were experienced in the fall of 1978 by CGS-member institutions in the West. Further, these institutions received fewer applications than previously, possibly indicating a continuation of this trend.

The Project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate and Professional Education at WICHE will issue a more detailed analysis of trends in graduate enrollment in spring 1979.

Table 1

TOTAL GRADUATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION*

Type of Institution (Highest Degree Awarded)	WICHE States				United States			
	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change
Master's Highest								
Public	14	50,469	46,530	7.8% decrease	69	125,494	121,354	3.3% decrease
Private	4	2,404	2,317	3.6% decrease	21	15,626	15,495	0.8% decrease
Subtotal	18	52,873	48,847	7.6% decrease	90	141,120	136,849	3.0% decrease
Ph.D. Highest								
Public	25	70,260	71,564	1.9% increase	135	414,210	417,083	0.7% increase
Private	7	8,436	8,412	0.3% decrease	72	123,614	122,448	0.9% decrease
Subtotal	32	78,696	79,976	1.6% increase	207	537,824	539,531	0.3% increase
Total Institutions								
Public	39	120,729	118,094	2.2% decrease	204	539,704	538,437	0.2% decrease
Private	11	10,840	10,729	1.0% decrease	93	139,240	137,943	0.9% decrease
Total	50	131,569	128,823	2.1% decrease	297	678,944	676,380	0.4% decrease

*For purposes of this survey, institutions were asked to include all students considered as registered in the graduate school, including education, engineering, social work, medical and business programs leading to MA/MS or Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctorates.

Source: Graduate Record Examinations Board.

Table 2

FIRST TIME GRADUATE ENROLLMENT BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION*

Type of Institution (Highest Degree Awarded)	WICHE States				United States			
	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change
Master's Highest								
Public	12	12,073	11,222	7.0% decrease	60	28,432	27,599	2.9% decrease
Private	4	694	670	3.5% decrease	21	4,968	5,173	4.1% increase
Subtotal	16	12,767	11,892	6.9% decrease	81	33,400	32,772	1.9% decrease
Ph.D. Highest								
Public	23	17,965	17,258	3.9% decrease	127	100,956	98,947	2.0% decrease
Private	6	2,400	2,544	6.0% increase	68	36,308	34,819	4.1% decrease
Subtotal	29	20,365	19,802	2.8% decrease	195	137,264	133,766	2.5% decrease
Total Institutions								
Public	35	30,038	28,480	5.2% decrease	187	129,388	126,546	2.2% decrease
Private	10	3,094	3,214	3.9% increase	89	41,276	39,992	3.1% decrease
Total	45	33,132	31,694	4.3% decrease	276	170,664	166,538	2.4% decrease

*For purposes of this survey, institutions were asked to include all students considered as registered in the graduate school, including education, engineering, social work, medical and business programs leading to MA/MS or Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctorates.

Source: Graduate Record Examinations Board.

Table 3

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDY*

Type of Institutions (Highest Degree Awarded)	WICHE States				United States			
	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change	Number of Institutions	1977	1978	% Change
Master's Highest								
Public	11	25,001	23,538	5.9% decrease	57	62,277	60,936	2.2% decrease
Private	4	1,423	1,881	32.2% increase	18	8,852	8,790	0.7% decrease
Subtotal	15	26,424	25,419	3.8% decrease	75	71,129	69,726	2.0% decrease
Ph.D. Highest								
Public	23	66,461	65,144	2.0% decrease	120	326,590	325,367	0.4% decrease
Private	6	7,359	7,623	3.6% increase	67	132,995	127,098	4.4% decrease
Subtotal	29	73,820	72,767	1.4% decrease	187	459,585	452,465	1.5% decrease
Total Institutions								
Public	34	91,462	88,682	3.0% decrease	177	388,867	386,303	0.7% decrease
Private	10	8,782	9,504	8.2% increase	85	141,847	135,888	4.2% decrease
Total	44	100,244	98,186	2.1% decrease	262	530,714	522,191	1.6% decrease

*For purposes of this survey, institutions were asked to include all students considered as registered in graduate school, including education, engineering, social work, medical and business programs leading to MA/MS or Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctorates.

Source: Graduate Record Examinations Board.

Table 4

FULL-TIME -- PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

Type of Institution	Number of Institutions	Full-Time Students 1977 Number	Full-Time Students 1977 % of Total	Full-Time Students 1978 Number	Full-Time Students 1978 % of Total	Part-Time Students 1977 Number	Part-Time Students 1977 % of Total	Part-Time Students 1978 Number	Part-Time Students 1978 % of Total
				WICHE STATES					
Master's Highest	16	11,496	22%	9,749	21%	39,634	78%	37,601	79%
Ph.D. Highest	31	39,931	55%	44,363	60%	32,417	45%	29,255	40%
Total	47	51,427	42%	54,112	45%	72,051	58%	66,856	55%
				UNITED STATES					
Master's Highest	86	27,563	20%	24,794	19%	107,833	80%	106,733	81%
Ph.D. Highest	193	219,169	45%	226,729	47%	264,283	55%	256,147	53%
Total	279	246,732	40%	251,523	41%	372,116	60%	362,880	59%

Source: Graduate Record Examinations Board.

PROJECT ON EXPANDING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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